

Frequently Asked Questions About the Fall 2007 Grades 3-9 MEAP Assessment Results

1) Since the assessments were taken in the fall, at the beginning of the school year, what content was tested?

Mathematics and English language arts assessments are administered in each grade from Grade 3 to Grade 8. These tests cover content taught during the previous school year. Science assessments are administered in the fall of the 5th and 8th grade years. Social studies assessments are administered in the fall of the 6th and 9th grade years. The science and social studies assessments cover content from the previous two to three grade levels.

2) Why are the MEAP assessments given in fall instead of winter or spring?

MEAP assessments are given in fall for several reasons. Fall testing allows assessment of the full previous year of instruction and measures student learning that was retained over the summer break. Fall MEAP administration ends early in the school year and encourages teachers to proceed quickly into teaching the current year curriculum.

3) Can MEAP Fall 2007 scores be compared to scores from previous years for the same grade and subject?

Beginning with Fall 2005, assessments are based on new content standards for both English language arts and Mathematics, and the assessment period was moved from winter to fall. While comparisons may be made from Fall 2006 Grades 3-9 to Fall 2005 Grades 3-9, it would be inappropriate to make comparisons to scores previous to Fall 2005. Summary reports for Fall 2007 do show results for both Fall 2007, Fall 2006, and Fall 2005.

4) What is the new Performance Level Change information that is now reported?

In reading, overall English Language Arts (ELA), and mathematics, the four performance levels have each been subdivided into three ranges for each performance level (low, mid, and high). Using these new ranges, each student's change in performance from the previous year can now be categorized as a Significant Decline, a Decline, No Change, an Improvement, or a Significant Improvement. These new categories reflect whether students are changing in their performance relative to the increasing expectations across grades.

5) How is the total score for English language arts (ELA) calculated?

Reading and writing scores are combined into a total ELA score by taking 2/3 of each student's reading score and adding it to 1/3 of the writing score.

6) Can Fall 2007 MEAP scores be used to get a preview of the school's status in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

No. The process for determining the AYP status for a school or district is very complex, involving data from many sources. AYP status will be reported separately by the state. Schools may expect to receive preliminary status reports in early 2008.

7) My school's fourth graders learned the content assessed in October 2007 at the K-3 school that they attended last year. Will those October 2007 scores be attributed to the school attended this year (2007-2008) or to the school attended last year (2006-2007)?

Because the fall assessments are based on content taught during the previous year, student performance for the determination of adequate yearly progress (AYP) is attributed to the school where instruction occurred the previous school year.

8) Some of the students assessed at our school were not enrolled at the school last year. Their scores do not reflect learning that occurred at our school. Why are these scores included in the public release?

The public MEAP results report on the performance of all students who were assessed at the building. MEAP has a 35-year history of including all students in the public reports. However, the scores of students enrolled less than a full academic year prior to testing will be excluded from the data used to determine if the school meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

9) Do these scores reflect the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) in English language arts and mathematics?

Yes. The scores are based on assessments which were built specifically to measure the new content standards (the GLCEs).

10) How can students with disabilities be held to the same standards as other students?

If students with disabilities took the MEAP, they are indeed held to the same standards as all other students. There are accommodations provided to assist students with specific disabilities (for example, a Braille version), but the students are all held to the same standards. However, if students with disabilities took MI-Access (Michigan's alternate assessments for students with cognitive disabilities), those students are assessed using alternate achievement standards that reflect the cognitive levels of those students.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans are developed for each student with disabilities by stakeholders in that student's education (e.g., parents, teachers, counselors, etc.). Those teams of stakeholders have the responsibility of determining which assessment test is the most appropriate for each student with disabilities and, therefore, the standards to which they should be held.